

Teacher Guide: Northstar Online Learning (NSOL)

This guide supports teachers and tutors working with learners accessing the NSOL online learning platform for instruction and practice of digital literacy skills. This guide's focus is to give background and guidance on supporting learners working on the NSOL practice modules. For additional support on navigating NSOL and creating accounts for learners, please refer to the following resources in the Northstar Admin Portal:

Northstar Manual: <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/manual>

Northstar Video Tutorials: <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/video-tutorials>

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Teacher Guide

Northstar Online Learning (NSOL)

What is Northstar Online Learning (NSOL)?

Northstar Online Learning (NSOL) is an online learning platform that features original content, including explanations, demonstration videos, and interactive practice. NSOL can be used either by learners working independently, or as a resource to support in-class instruction or one-on-one tutoring. Northstar locations can make learner accounts which track NSOL work and assessments completed by the learners. When learners complete an assessment while logged into their accounts, they are automatically directed to the NSOL content corresponding to what they need to learn.

All learners will benefit most from NSOL modules, when they have the support of a teacher to ask questions from as they work through modules.

What language level do the NSOL learning modules and Northstar Digital Literacy curriculum support?

The lessons were written to support adult learners at a mid-level English reading comprehension ability or higher; this reading ability is also required for the Northstar Digital Literacy assessments and the Northstar curricula.

The NSOL modules support adult English language learners at an Intermediate Level, as defined by the NRS (National Reporting System) as a CASAS reading level 211, or higher, or a TABE (11-12) Reading Score of 501, or higher. Lower-level learners will need additional scaffolds and instruction to access and utilize the NSOL module content.

How should I use the Northstar Online Learning resources in conjunction with the Northstar curriculum and the assessments?

- Northstar Online Learning, like the Northstar Digital Literacy curriculum, is aligned with standards and supports adult learners in meeting the requirements of the [Northstar Digital Literacy assessments](#).
- NSOL provides the optional ability for Northstar locations to create individual learner accounts, which include direct links to online instruction and practice resources as well as a list of completed assessments with scores. There is a robust reporting mechanism for ABE programs wanting to claim proxy hours for out-of-class work completed by learners.
- After a learner is set up with an NSOL account, Northstar recommends instructors give learners an assessment as a pre-test to identify specific skills in a topic that learners need to work on. When available, NSOL will connect learners with interactive practice modules to practice skills. These can be supplemental to instruction utilizing the Northstar curriculum for that topic.

What NSOL Modules are currently available?

There are several NSOL modules currently available, with more in development. When learners log in to NSOL they will see available practice modules and which modules are not yet available. Learners will be asked to complete the corresponding Northstar assessment to identify skills they need to practice prior to accessing the NSOL practice module for that topic.

How can learners access the NSOL practice modules?

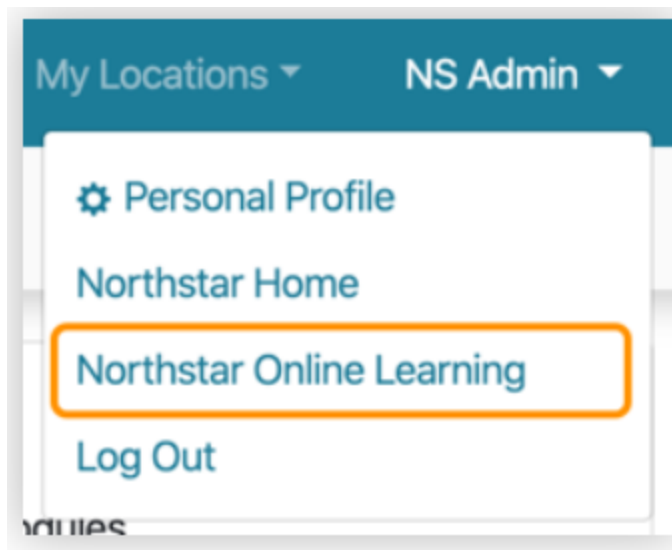
Please refer to the Northstar Manual for more details on signing learners up for NSOL accounts and supporting learners with log in. <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/manual#part-using-nsol-for-staff>

How can teachers access the NSOL practice modules (to view them as learners?)

Admins at Northstar locations can give staff members access to NSOL so they can view content as learners would. In the Location Info tab under Manage Staff, make sure the toggle under NSOL Access is enabled. All new staff members will have NSOL Access enabled by default.

Name	Email	Last Login	Admin Portal Access ⓘ	Proctor ⓘ	Admin ⓘ	NSOL Access ⓘ
Admin ABC	admin-abc@gmail.com	an hour ago	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Staff members with NSOL Access can easily toggle back and forth between the Admin Portal and NSOL. To do this, click your name at the top right and select Northstar Online Learning.



Please refer to the Northstar Manual for more details on using NSOL. <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/manual#part-nsol-for-learners>

How are the NSOL practice modules organized? What can learners and teachers expect from each module?

Aligned with best practice in instruction, NSOL practice modules follow a pattern of “I do” (instruction), “we do” (supported practice), “you do” (checks for understanding). Each NSOL practice module is divided into sections to support the standards for that topic, and reduce the amount of content presented at one time. After checks for understanding, learners receive feedback and (if needed or desired) have the opportunity to review the instruction and practice before attempting the learning check questions again. Below are more details for each section.

NSOL Instruction


Lessons are supportive of different learning styles and levels. Instruction includes audio and visuals to support learners' comprehension of a topic. Skills are modeled through videos, animated screens, and authentic example scenarios. Learners also may be directed to read short amounts of text on the screen or click through to explore various topics. Closed captioning is provided to support all learners and can help to improve comprehension and retention of content. Learners can revisit the instruction as many times as they would like, using the menu.

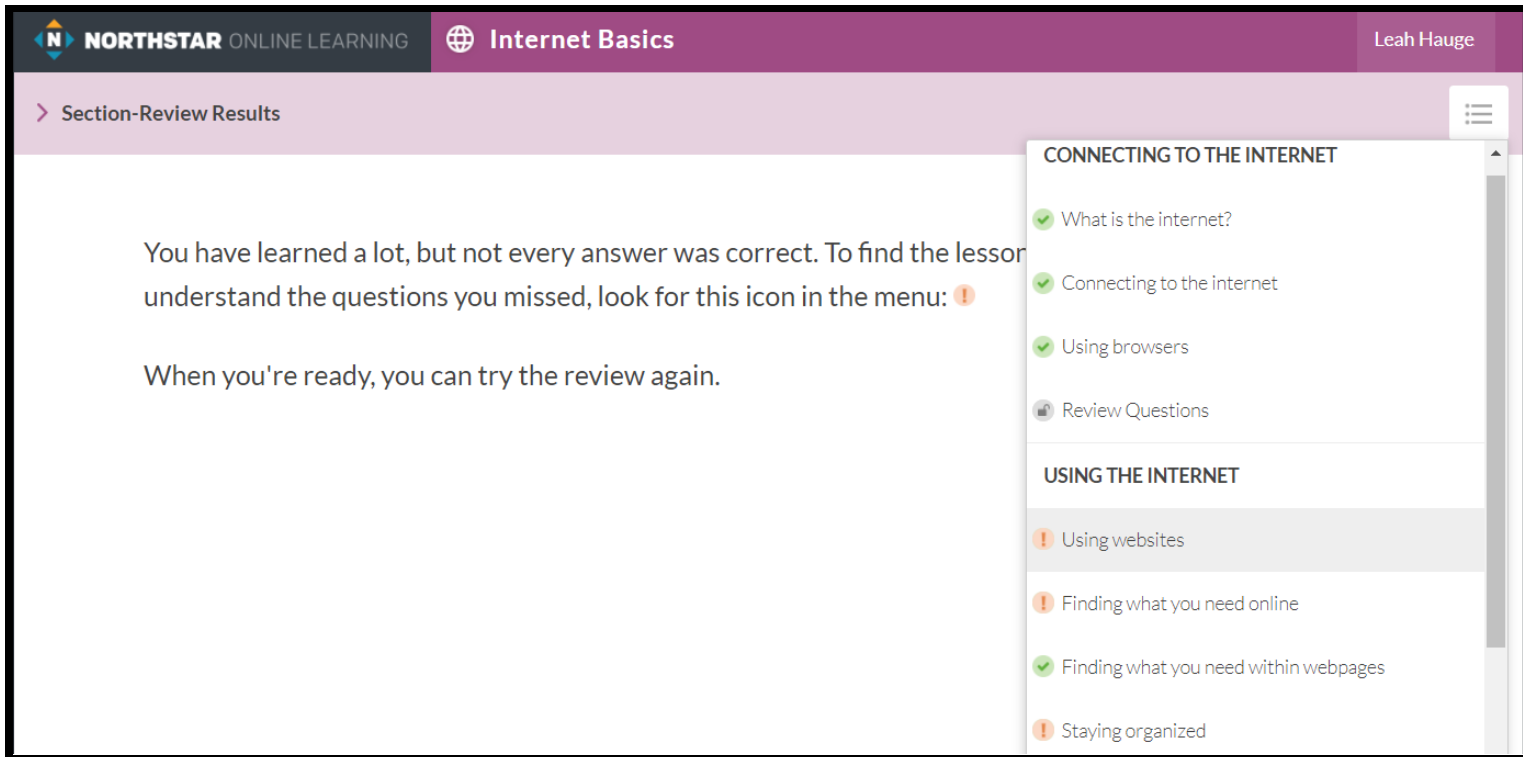
NSOL Try Its

After instruction and modeling, learners are given a chance to practice a skill with support and feedback. Digital literacy is developed through practice. For mastery, learners need dedicated opportunities to experiment with new skills on the computer. As learners try a skill that has been taught, NSOL will pop up additional instruction and encouragement to help learners build confidence in skills and choose alternatives when their initial attempt is incorrect.

NSOL Section Review

At the end of each section, NSOL will check for understanding by asking learners review questions. These learning checks ask NSOL users to apply the skill/s modeled through instruction, and practiced in Try Its to complete a real-world task, such as bookmarking websites, completing online forms, and/or to show understanding of digital literacy vocabulary. Review questions are interactive and modeled after the Northstar assessments, giving learners practice in navigating a similar platform in a learning space.

Unlike Try Its, review questions do not offer immediate feedback for learners. If learners answer a review question incorrectly, they will be prompted to review the lesson for that standard before they can attempt the review questions again. Learners and teachers can find the lessons that will help learners understand the questions they missed, by looking for this icon in the menu of the NSOL module:  Northstar encourages repetition of NSOL instruction after missed attempts on section review questions.



The screenshot shows the Northstar Online Learning interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Northstar logo, "NORTHSTAR ONLINE LEARNING", a globe icon, "Internet Basics", and the user name "Leah Hauge". Below the navigation bar, there is a section header "Section-Review Results". The main content area contains the following text:

You have learned a lot, but not every answer was correct. To find the lessons you missed, look for this icon in the menu: !

When you're ready, you can try the review again.

On the right side, there is a menu titled "CONNECTING TO THE INTERNET" with the following items:

- What is the internet? (green checkmark)
- Connecting to the internet (green checkmark)
- Using browsers (green checkmark)
- Review Questions (lock icon)

Below this, there is a section titled "USING THE INTERNET" with the following items:

- Using websites (orange exclamation mark)
- Finding what you need online (orange exclamation mark)
- Finding what you need within webpages (green checkmark)
- Staying organized (orange exclamation mark)

How can I best support learners who miss an NSOL review question multiple times?

Help learners navigate the menu to find the lessons marked by a !. Encourage learners to repeat those lessons in order to build the skill. Try supporting learners through review questions that they struggle with by using the following prompts: *Have you tried _____? What happens if you _____? What is your best guess?*

Additionally, teachers can use the Northstar curriculum to provide targeted instruction on a skill learners are struggling with. The curriculum includes scope and sequence maps which can help teachers to find specific lesson plans to guide learners through additional practice of a skill. Again, repetition and multiple opportunities to practice help learners to become digitally literate!

Where can I give feedback or comments on Northstar Online Learning?

- Please email us at support@digitalliteracyassessment.org
- We appreciate your feedback. Please understand, we are a small staff, so changes and edits may take some time.
- It is also important to note, Northstar Online Learning is used in many different teaching contexts, so we may not make a change if it is disadvantageous to other settings.